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Sustainable Soil and Water Quality Practices on Forest Land



Michigan Department of Natural Resources



Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

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FOREWORD

Dear Reader and User:

This is the first substantial revision of the “Water Quality Practices on Forest Land”, also known as Michigan’s Forestry Best Management Practices (BMP) Manual. The original was published in 1994 with several re-printings and minor changes to adjust for governmental reorganization and re-codification of environmental and natural resource protection laws.

A key influence in revising the original manual has been the development of forest certification standards. These standards emphasize sustainable forestry principles and practices which include protection of water and soil resources. In the United States, there are two primary forest certification systems: The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), developed by the American Forest and Paper Association, and the set of standards developed by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

The scope and use of the term “Best Management Practices” (BMPs) has been expanded in this manual. This manual uses “BMPs” in the context as those practices that not only protect surface water quality, but soil quality too. Two new sections have been added: 1) The forest wetland protection practices to use when constructing roads, and 2) guidelines to address rutting. The term “buffer strip” has been changed to “Riparian Management Zone” (RMZ). This term provides a more accurate description regarding the activities allowed in the forested area adjacent to a stream or other water body. Forest management activities are allowed, provided extra precaution is used and the integrity and function of the RMZ is maintained during and after forest management activities (i.e. logging) are completed.

Please note that the BMPs described in previous editions are incorporated into this manual. The specifications have not been changed nor have the statutes governing them.

From a legal standpoint, the use of these BMPs is voluntary. However, properly applying these practices enables the responsible party or parties to meet pertinent environmental protection regulations. Voluntarily applying these practices will, under most weather conditions, prevent sediment or other non-point sources to go into a stream or other open water body.

This manual describes the specifications and techniques to properly apply voluntary BMPs. It also provides information regarding environmental laws and regulations that may apply when forest management activities occur.

This manual provides recommended guidelines and specifications. It does not cover all situations, as conditions vary from site to site. There is room for latitude, and these practices may be modified for specific site conditions to protect soil and site productivity, and water quality resources.

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